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**CONFIDENTIAL--LAW OF THE SEA (LOS) INFORMATION ON EIGHT CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES**


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01 OF 01


**MICROFILMED**

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CIA/DBI PN 69.2507/10  
~~5 March 1974~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, North American Caribbean Branch/OER  
ATTENTION :   
THROUGH : Chief, Geography Division, OBG  
SUBJECT : Law of the Sea (LOS) Information on Eight Caribbean Countries

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Attached per your request are some hastily prepared notes on the LOS interests of eight Caribbean countries and the factors influencing these interests. Much of this information has been gleaned from our recently constructed LOS country files. The materials were prepared by  who will be glad to answer questions about them.


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Chief, Special Research Branch  
Geography Division, OBG

Attachment:  
As stated above.

Distribution:  
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9

BAHAMAS

The Bahamas became independent in July 1973. They are expected to drop their present support for the three mile-territorial sea and press for extension of the territorial sea to 12 miles, and a wider zone for exclusive fishing jurisdiction. Bahamian officials have continuously expressed a desire to promulgate an "archipelago claim." This is being considered in order to broaden their mineral and fisheries claims, control pollution, and afford better security.

The Bahamian government, recognizing the potential wealth of its adjacent seabeds, laid claim in 1970 to the resources of the continental shelf to depths of 200 meters or beyond to where exploitation is possible. The Bahamian Government's White Paper on Independence stated that the GOBI will seek to "claim sovereignty over the closed waters, dividing them according to location into internal waters and territorial waters in order to gain exclusive rights over fisheries and mineral exploitation." The paper also states, however, that the GOBI "will seek, under international law or other means to guarantee free passage for foreign vessels in the designated sea lanes throughout the archipelago."

Fish are regarded as one of the few natural resources of the Bahamas and great emphasis has been put on development of the fishing industry as the way in which the economy, now so dependent on tourism, can be diversified.

Offshore drilling by American petroleum companies is underway in the area and the government has requested US assistance in devising regulations to prevent marine oil pollution.

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BARBADOS

Barbados does not have a firm LOS position; she recognizes a three-mile territorial sea. There has been minimal mineral production in the Eastern Caribbean and there are few commercial fishing beds. Barbados has no known offshore resources. Therefore, in LOS matters Barbados is more likely to be concerned about concession rights off foreign coasts rather than protection of its own coastal waters.

Barbados has a wide continental margin that extends far into the Atlantic. However, as an undeveloped country she is not presently engaged in oil exploration.

Various GOB spokesmen have indicated that Barbados leans toward a 12-mile territorial sea concept rather than 200 miles, but does not want to take a public stance in opposition to claims by other LA's. She is especially sensitive of Brazil's views on these matters since Brazil has been tolerant of Barbados-based vessels operating well within its 200-mile claimed fishing limit.

GOB officials have indicated that the patrimonial sea concept granting exclusive rights over natural resources to coastal states is too rigid in that it does not permit other states to share adequately in benefits of natural resources within the patrimonial sea -- the reason given for their abstention on the Declaration of Santo Domingo, June 1972.

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic claims six miles territorial sea and an exclusive fishing zone of 12 miles. Like most Caribbean countries she feels that a 200-mile territorial sea is impractical in such a semi-enclosed sea situation.

The Dominican Republic has a narrow shelf, but a more extensive continental margin. Thus far, however, seabed exploration in this area indicates only meager offshore minerals. The Dominican Republic would control all of her continental margin with a 200-mile economic zone, and thus she is not likely to favor coastal state jurisdiction beyond 200 miles.

- 3 -

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GRENADA

Grenada, as other islands in the Lesser Antilles, relies heavily upon the import of all manner of manufactured commodities and a wide variety of foods and beverages. There are no known mineral resources of any commercial consequence and industry is confined largely to simple processing and tourist trade.

Since recent independence Grenada has been in complete economic disarray.

- 4 -

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GUYANA

Guyana has a broad continental shelf to 200 meters and an equally broad continental margin beyond to 2500 meters. She recognizes a three-mile territorial sea, but has mentioned a 200-mile economic zone. She refused to sign the Santo Domingo final document stating that she could not endorse proposition that a state is bound by outward limit of 12n.m. in establishing its territorial sea.

A long-standing international boundary dispute between Guyana and Venezuela was further exacerbated in 1968 when Venezuela extended its territorial sea claim into the area of Guyanese territorial sea by an act unprecedented in international law. If enforced, the Venezuelan action would prohibit Guyana from exercising its legal right to the contiguous zone and to the continental shelf.

At present there is no oil or natural gas production in Guyana. However, offshore concessions have been granted in the area disputed with Venezuela. Shell (Guyana) Ltd. has contracted with US firm to begin offshore drilling about March 1974. In 1971 Shell found oil and gas bearing layers at edge of continental shelf.

Fisheries is a major source of employment and a major foreign exchange earner. Foreign and national trawlers operate from US and British-financed bases in Georgetown. Most fishing takes place beyond 40 miles from shore, the most productive area being "the gullies" near the French Guiana-Brazil border. Shrimp is the major commercial fishing activity. One of the major problems has been Guyanan-based vessels fishing within Brazil's claimed 200-mile territorial sea.

HAITI

Haiti claims a 12-mile territorial sea with a three-mile contiguous zone where they claim exclusive jurisdiction over fishing and control over pollution. She has a very narrow continental shelf out to 200 meters.

Little is known about offshore resources due to limited exploration. The country is extremely undeveloped and there has been no offshore oil or natural gas production.

Haitian waters are in the path of major fish migrations, but the commercial fishing industry is undeveloped. The country has no trained marine scientists, and no study or exploration of the offshore waters has been made. Of the small take, the most valuable catch is spiny lobsters.

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JAMAICA

Jamaica has a very narrow continental shelf out to 200 meters. Beyond to 2500 meters the shelf is broad and shared in the east with Haiti. A 12-mile territorial sea and exclusive fishing zone is claimed, and officials have expressed interest in regional arrangements for marine resources.

Jamaica has no oil or gas production but has plans for a large refinery.

The Jamaican fishing industry is based almost entirely upon small scale traditional activities employing dugout canoes, exploiting inshore species on the narrow insular shelf and offshore resources on the banks and cays. Carrier vessels collect and deliver the fish to the main port at Kingston. Recently Jamaican boats have begun to fish for more and better quality fish off the coast of Central America. The tourist industry routinely imports shrimp and lobster to make up for poor quality local production.

Jamaican views on the deep seabed regime express support for an international regime with strong international management and control.

Jamaica has urged that a study be undertaken of adverse effects caused by marine pollution on the economies of countries which depend on tourism, and thus may be an active proponent of coastal state environmental control over maritime traffic in a coastal zone.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad and Tobago is an island state with a broad shelf out to 200 meters which it shares in part with Venezuela. A 12-mile territorial sea and exclusive fishing zone has been claimed. Engaged in oil exploration and exploitation, almost half of her GNP now comes from oil and about half of this revenue is from offshore production.

Trinidad and Tobago's main fishery function is as a distant-water port; Port of Spain is the major port for freezer trawlers fishing shrimp along northern South America. The fishing industry is presently dominated by US and other foreign interests but the GOTT hopes to get assistance to develop a locally-owned fishing industry. Fish is also a basic protein caught by subsistence fishermen.

Trinidad and Tobago has been one of the leading exponents of a strong international regime for the deep seabeds. They have expressed concern with the effects of oil pollution on the tourist industry. They have not had much to say about an international regime in the deep seabed area, except that there should be international scientific investigation there with shared data.

Trinidad and Tobago has also considered the advisability of making a joint archipelagic claim with the Caribbean countries that would give them a joint area of territorial waters extending across the sea.

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